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WEEKLY REPORT

THE SITUATION IN THE CONGO

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Office of Current Intelligence

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Situation in the Congo

(Information as of 1700 EST 13 April)

SUMMARY

Government columns in the northeast are continuing to move rapidly against sporadic resistance. Rebels in the Fizi salient, however, which borders the steep western shores of Lake Tanganyika, seem still intent on taking Uvira and Albertville. Uganda's interest in the rebellion has cooled, the Sudan is becoming more detached, but Tanzania appears eager to buoy the cause. Preliminary election returns from Kongo Centrale Province, President Kasavubu's political base, suggest the chief of state has lost popularity there. Premier Tshombé denies he covets the presidency, but is nonetheless watching closely this latest turn of events.

1. Military Situation

Mercenary patrols in the northeast last week moved about with relative ease. Dungu, Niangara, and Mungbere--the last towns of any consequence in the area--were taken with scarcely a shot. Reports continue to indicate that most local inhabitants are relieved at the rebels' exit.

Insurgent bands continue to operate, however. The mercenary garrison at Aba, on the Sudanese frontier, was briefly attacked last week, and there was a skirmish near Mahagi, opposite Uganda. On 7 April, T-28s flying in the Congo near the Ugandan border were fired at by antiaircraft guns, apparently located in Uganda. There were no hits.

Stanleyville continues quiet. Increasing numbers of rebels who surround the city are emerging from the bush to give themselves up. Passage from downriver apparently is becoming less hazardous. Another barge convoy, this one carrying some 1,500 tons of cargo, mostly consumer goods, arrived in the city on 12 April. The convoy apparently was fired at only once.

The area of greatest rebel activity continues to be the Fizi salient, which borders Lake Tanganyika. Attacks on Uvira to the north of the Burundi frontier, continue, but its 450-man garrison so far has fended them off with relative ease. A small force of mercenaries is nearby, so the town probably can be held for the time being.

Rebels south of Fizi apparently hope to capture Albertville, the base of the Congolese lake patrol. There are rumors that the insurgents in the area will be joined shortly by rebels who are said to be staging across the lake in Tanzania, near Kigoma. The Tanzanian-based insurgents are reported to have three motor boats and three dhows with which to effect their crossing.

To oppose them, the Congolese Government is said to have eight powered patrol boats about 350

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soldiers, and 50-odd mercenaries in the vicinity of Albertville. B-26s from Stanleyville also visit the city on occasion.

The threat to Albertville may not in fact be great. Rebels in Kigoma, although reported in the thousands, are said to be downhearted, and any lake crossing by reinforcements would be perilous.

On the other hand, it seems likely that clearing the insurgents from the Fizi region also will be difficult. North of Albertville, the hills are steep and the forests thick--ideal for guerrilla operations. A tourist handbook describes the area as "a succession of escarpments and spectacular descents which will appeal to those who love thrills."

2. The Rebels and Their Sympathizers

Several captains of the rebellion were still in Egypt last week trying to sort out their differences. They made no visible progress.

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"Foreign Minister" Kanza, meanwhile, done with announcing rebel victories in Nairobi on 4 April, moved his propaganda platform to Dar the next day.

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Nkrumah apparently is willing to rush arms to the rebels, but seems unsure of what route to use. Two heavily-loaded IL-18s have been poised on Ghanaian runways since the beginning of the month, waiting for the decisions to be made. Nkrumah hopes to send them to the Sudan.

The Sudan, however, less eager than it was to help the rebels now that Tshombé's mercenaries are on its borders, seems to be throwing obstacles in Nkrumah's path.

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Uganda's support for the rebels, once active, seems now to have ceased almost entirely.

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Prime Minister Obote has stopped--for the time being at least--his public denunciations of Tshombé.

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Of the Congo's eastern neighbors, only Tanzania seems resolved to continue aiding the rebels.

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it is becoming increasingly probable that arms once thought to be going to Mozambique nationalists actually made their way to the Congolese.

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Arms continue to flow into Tanzania, apparently for the rebels. On 7 April, an Egyptian cargo plane was seen unloading in Dar es Salaam.

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3. Internal Affairs

Provincial and parliamentary elections are proceeding without violence but amid widespread election irregularities. Incomplete results from provinces thus far reporting contain no surprises. Voting has closely followed tribal lines, with established leaders being supported on both national and local levels. In Katanga, Tshombé, running for a national deputy seat, won easily. CONACO (Confederation des Associations du Katanga), his political vehicle, is likely to obtain a sufficient majority to form provincial governments in East Katanga and Lualaba provinces.

Preliminary returns from Kongo Centrale Province, stronghold of President Kasavubu's ABAKO (Association des Bakongo), point to a narrow victory by the dissident party wing over the conservative branch of the party, which Kasavubu supported. Kasavubu was easily elected a national deputy, but the conservative wing may prove unable to form the new provincial government.

Tshombé seems likely to look upon Kasavubu's political troubles as evidence that the president is not as necessary for his (Tshombé's) long-term political survival as he once thought.

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Kasavubu suspects that Tshombé intends to run for the presidency. His suspicions are being fanned by several politicians who were powerful before Tshombé became premier.

4. Belgium's Role

Tshombé has shown some suspicion recently that Belgian policy is directed toward his ouster. He apparently has been disturbed by the election activities of Belgians employed by an important Leopoldville newspaper, and by Interior Minister Munongo's newly established "intelligence" service

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So far Brussels has succeeded in reassuring him, however. Tshombé has apparently welcomed a proposal from Brussels to give considerable authority in the northeast Congo to his long-trusted Belgian military adviser Colonel Van der Walle.

Van der Walle is to be in charge of the some 50 administrators whom Brussels has promised to send in to five or six key liberated towns. Van der Walle will at the same time have control of the Belgian military technicians in the area and will act as liaison between Brussels, Leopoldville, the provincial authorities, and the Congolese National Army in the northeast. He will not have any open control over Congolese officials.

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